

Downtown | Lewiston

Recommendations for neighborhood redevelopment

Written by the Harvard Community Development Project
in partnership with the Downtown Neighborhood Action Committee

This report by Harvard University's Community Development Project includes recommendations for the redevelopment of downtown Lewiston, ME based on research, site work, and consultation with Lewiston's Downtown Neighborhood Action Committee.

Acknowledgements

The members of the Community Development Project would like to thank the Downtown Neighborhood Action Committee for providing the opportunity for the group to get to know Lewiston and in the process, to meet many talented individuals who care deeply about the city. Particular thanks go to Craig Saddlemire for his ongoing support and guidance and to Shanna Rogers for making CDP feel at home in Lewiston.

Finally, this document would not be possible without the input of many residents; we are grateful for your feedback and thoughtfulness.

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introduction





What is CDP?

The Harvard Community Development Project (CDP) consists of a group of graduate students from Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government (KSG) and Graduate School of Design (GSD). CDP was founded in 2006 to promote local development work in Baptist Town, Mississippi. Beginning in 2012, CDP transitioned its focus from the Mississippi Delta to instead support projects in small towns in New England facing policy, planning, and design challenges related to housing, economic growth, inclusion of traditionally disadvantaged populations, and similar community concerns.

Lewistonians and CDP members at the end of a community clean-up day in September 2013

Introduction

CDP Mission

The mission of CDP is:

To facilitate sustainable change that successfully addresses the specific needs of underserved communities by using the skills of CDP members to produce tangible deliverables that are based on community outreach and an analysis of socio-economic and spatial contexts.

CDP is able to provide valuable assistance to communities by serving as an independent third party that can objectively collect information directly from community members and synthesize findings to inform the work of local governments and agencies.

DNAC Vision

The Downtown Neighborhood Action Committee (DNAC) has seen great growth in Lewiston since the inception of the Downtown Neighborhood Action Plan, but there are still improvements to be made. To that end, the DNAC envisions a residential downtown that feels like home to a diverse population of residents, welcoming and affirming for people of any age, race, religion or creed, ethnicity, gender, sexual identity, income class, or physical ability.

This is a neighborhood that inspires pride in current residents and attracts new people, not just because of affordability, but because the neighborhood offers a vibrant urban community. Its infrastructure supports a multi-modal transportation system that includes a convenient public transit system, pedestrian oriented streetscapes, bicycling infrastructure, and a variety of public and private parking options. Parks and street trees offer shade, recreation, and communal gathering places. Within walking distance, residents have access to employment opportunities, shopping, and essential medical and educational services. Residents have a diversity of housing options, whether that means owning, renting, or cooperatively owning. The downtown has architectural characteristics that make it unique and catch the eye. When walking through the downtown, one is impressed with the cleanliness of the neighborhood, and residents and visitors

alike feel a sense of stewardship in keeping the downtown beautiful.

Lewiston's residents continue to be proud of the place they call home, and this is visible on every street corner, park bench, and front stoop. These characteristics bring everyone in the downtown together to form a safe, healthy, multicultural community.

DNAC-CDP Partnership Background

At the same time that CDP was exploring partnership options in New England, Lewiston's Downtown Neighborhood Action Committee (DNAC) was beginning the process of updating its vision and plan for local development. A CDP member who was acquainted with Craig Saddlemire, DNAC member and Lewiston city councilor, proposed collaboration between the two groups. In the spring of 2013, CDP confirmed its role with DNAC: the group would provide DNAC with historical and comparative research to support its plan for the downtown, as well as feedback from community members that would inform DNAC's priorities for neighborhood development. Shortly afterwards, CDP began visits to Lewiston and meetings with local stakeholders.

Project and Document Goals

The goal of this project is, ultimately, for DNAC to be able to update its plan for Downtown to guide local development. CDP's goals as a contributor to the project are to:

- Provide historical information about Lewiston that highlights changes to the downtown's physical, social, and economic character in recent years;
- Offer examples of other cities that have faced similar social, economic, and political challenges and that have successfully established a thriving downtown environment that is open and welcoming to all residents;
- Gather input from stakeholders about their preferences for downtown development strategies;
- Finally, synthesize findings into a set of recommendations that can, ideally, be integrated into DNAC's plan.

This report is designed to include both a succinct set of recommendations (highlighted in the Key Recommendations section) and an account of the findings that informed these recommendations (in the topic-specific sections). CDP recognizes that this set of recommendations represents a long-term ideal for Midtown, and that budgetary constraints will require phased implementation where ideas are adopted.



The area generally identified as Downtown in this report

Site Definition

The Downtown area consists primarily of a residential section of town east of Lisbon Street, extending to Bartlett Street and framed by Ash Street and Adams Avenue to the north and south, respectively. The residential neighborhood has traditionally been referred to as the “Tree Street” neighborhood.

For the purposes of this study, largely due to the feedback received regarding

opportunities for the Lisbon Street business district, the area was extended west to Canal Street. DNAC generally identifies three distinct sections of Downtown:

- Riverfront (between Bates Mills and the river)
- Centreville (commercial area on Canal and Lisbon Streets)
- Midtown (residential area between Park, Bartlett, Ash, and Adams Streets)

Methodology

Throughout the fall of 2013, CDP employed two primary means of gathering information for this project:

1. **Research.** The team conducted desk research to gain a historical perspective on Lewiston's downtown and to understand other cities that can serve as precedents for development strategies in Lewiston. This information was organized by topic to make it easier to apply to specific recommendations for DNAC. A list of sources is included in the appendix.
2. **Outreach.** The team visited Lewiston on six occasions to meet with stakeholders that ranged from high school youth to local government leaders. When in-person meetings were not possible, the team conducted phone interviews to ensure that a variety of perspectives were reflected in the recommendations that were made. A full list of community participants is included in Appendix A.

As information was collected, recommendations were developed and refined, and graphical elements were created to supplement key messages presented in this report. The final document was completed in February 2014.

Current Situation

Downtown Lewiston was once a thriving urban center, benefitting from the strong economic value that the Bates Mills brought to the area. As industry faded, however, dynamics changed and the Downtown began to hollow out, leaving empty shells of large buildings and a population that could no longer rely on a single industry for employment. Following a quiet period, storefronts along Lisbon Street are filling again, and new life is entering the residential areas of the Downtown. A concerted effort is needed to establish a vibrant urban center that supports a wide range of businesses that reflect the diversity of Lewiston's residents. While the range of community and social services available is commendable, opportunities exist to better align service offerings and structures with the needs of the very community members they are designed to assist.



Downtown Lewiston

As articulated by the majority of residents interviewed – ranging from high schoolers to young professionals to long-time Mainers – one of present-day Lewiston’s greatest strengths lies in its diversity. Lewiston has a long history of welcoming immigrant populations, and a number of new Americans are helping to pave the way for an active and vibrant Downtown. The City has a tremendous opportunity to provide amenities and spaces for interaction, community, learning, and collaboration among residents. The updated Comprehensive Plan in development by the City of Lewiston addresses some of these considerations at a municipal scale, but DNAC believes that the Downtown neighborhood, roughly comprised of census tracts 201 and 204, warrants attention beyond what the Comprehensive Plan will propose in terms of development. This report responds to the visioning process that DNAC began in 2013 and explores opportunities for physical and programmatic changes to the Downtown that should strengthen its identity as a vital residential and commercial core in Lewiston.



key recommendations





Key Recommendations for DNAC

Conversations with Downtown residents, business owners, service providers, and landlords, as well as with members of City government, Bates faculty members, and other organizations active in Lewiston, have provided much enthusiasm for and insight into a broad range of potential approaches to improve the Downtown neighborhood. A set of central themes emerged from these conversations and may be helpful to DNAC as a framework for planning, economic development, and social service provision in the area. The themes have been identified here and supplemented with more specific topical recommendations.

Key Recommendations

Central Themes

Some general themes that emerged across discussions with all stakeholders are reflected below; these ideas can be in specific programs and development strategies geared at strengthening the physical and social fabric in Downtown Lewiston.

- Projects and initiatives for improving the Downtown should not be considered in isolation, but rather as interrelated strategies that have an impact on Lewiston beyond the boundaries of Downtown
 - Many stakeholders consider the geographic area referred to as the ‘Downtown’ as extending to include the commercial area around Lisbon Street and Canal Street; planning initiatives should span a similar area in order to enable a holistic view of residential, commercial, and civic activity
 - Housing, jobs, and social services are all interconnected: questions about one topic prompt discussion of the others, and planning should therefore be directed towards strategies that address these three elements in combination
- Greater communication and collaboration across stakeholder groups has the potential to fill current gaps within the community and reduce misunderstandings that lead to tensions Downtown
 - Landlord-tenant relationships, resident employment opportunities, multi-cultural civic engagement, and other dynamics that have posed challenges Downtown may be improved through programs that improve communication among currently disparate groups
 - Creative structures can provide opportunities for residents, service providers, students, academic institutions, and the City to improve communication among constituencies (specific examples provided by topic below)

- Changing perceptions have the potential to create new realities for Downtown Lewiston
 - Downtown resident perspectives about the neighborhood’s value frequently differ from those of Lewistonians who live elsewhere in the city
 - The perception of post-industrial “grittiness” that exists in the mill buildings and elsewhere Downtown varies: some community members view these places as dirty and in need of complete rebuilding, while others see opportunities to capitalize on such locations to develop places that reflect Lewiston’s history and future
 - Crime in the Downtown is anecdotally perceived to be greater than statistics indicate
 - Re-thinking strategies for attracting a variety of people to live Downtown can positively impact the real estate market: the area includes many amenities valued by young professionals and families and can be more effectively promoted
- The municipal government must be prepared to play a significant role in the redevelopment of Downtown
 - The Mayor is an influential figure, and his support will be necessary to enable productive, sustainable change Downtown
 - Diversity in Lewiston will need to be recognized and valued by the City as a central part of the Downtown’s strength and identity
- Bates College and other area students (USM Lewiston-Auburn College, Kaplan University, Central Maine Community College) and local youth are well-positioned to contribute to Downtown neighborhood development
 - Local youth have embraced Lewiston’s diversity and have assumed active roles within the community, setting an example for community members of all ages
 - Current Bates faculty and students have an increasing interest in participating more directly in Downtown events and community development work



Bandstand in Kennedy Park

Density

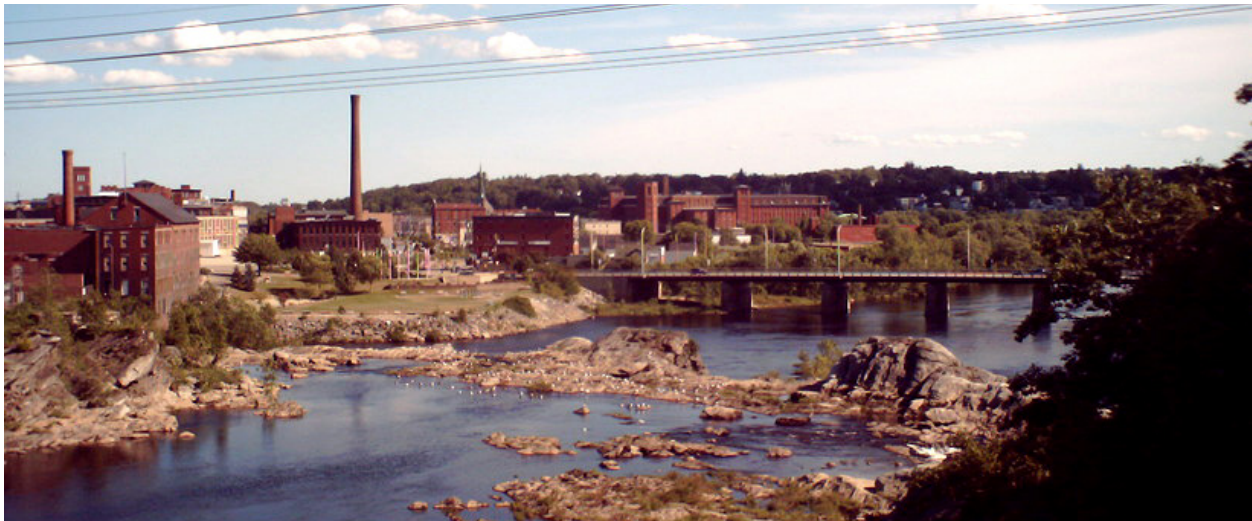
Based on the challenges that have developed from uneven patterns of residential density in the Downtown, the following development strategy is recommended:

- Set specific density goals for Midtown based on appealing existing examples, such as Maple Street and Horton Street (27-40 units per acre)
- Concentrate higher-density residential construction around the Lisbon Street corridor, where older buildings with a variety of uses can be repurposed into apartments
- Focus on lower-density residential construction in the “Midtown” neighborhood to fill in currently vacant lots and provide housing types that suit the needs of the types of households that are currently underserved (see the Housing section for more detail)
- Develop buildings to a “pedestrian-friendly scale,” targeting 30-50’ in height in Midtown

Housing

Housing is a hot topic in Lewiston, and one that solicits a variety of opinions from residents, landlords, business owners, and involved officials and professionals. This set of recommendations proposes overall strategies aimed at responding to Downtown Lewiston’s current housing needs, as well as some specific ideas that may inspire creative development.

- Support new housing development that provides opportunities for homeownership for households of a variety of income levels
 - Current owner occupancy rates are low Downtown (24%) compared with Lewiston as a whole (50%) and the U.S. more broadly (65%)
 - Homeownership can be expected to increase social stability in the neighborhood and raise property values through improved home quality
 - Eliminate parking restrictions that can be a deterrent to new construction given limited vacant land and the requirement of 1 - 2 spaces per unit
- Develop housing typologies that respond to current households’ needs and improve the streetscape and physical fabric of the neighborhood
 - Focus new development on units that include at least four bedrooms in order to accommodate large families that are currently crowded into smaller units
 - For infill development in Midtown, encourage pedestrian scale buildings (small apartment buildings and row-



Industrial features in Lewiston

- houses) that stack no higher than 2-3 residential units vertically and create a more even pattern of development than currently exists
- Consider higher-density residential development along Lisbon Street and Canal Street when defining the Downtown’s mix of housing typologies/ unit types; home typologies in the “Midtown” area should complement higher-density apartments, not strive to compete with them
- Reevaluate rates and management of subsidized housing Downtown
 - Current levels of subsidized housing are high compared with Lewiston as a whole and national patterns for urban areas
 - Provide sufficient opportunities for market-rate renters and owners to live in the area
 - Strengthen quality standards for private landlords that accept Section 8 vouchers in order to equalize quality between privately-managed and subsidized units in order to encourage the development of mixed-income housing, establish city-wide inclusionary housing policy, whereby the city requires, as a condition for any city partnership or subsidy, new multi-family residential building developments to include a mix of market rate and affordable units that produce a minimum ratio of 10-15%, for whichever type of housing (affordable or market-rate) would otherwise be excluded from the development.
- Promote housing finance models that respond to cultural norms and community housing needs
 - The emerging CDFI model and similar approaches to financing that are compliant with Somali norms should be supported
 - Habitat for Humanity building sites may be a cost-effective way to enable homeownership for families in the “Midtown” area and can utilize a single family or townhouse or rowhouse model depending on the site
 - The limited-equity co-op model that is

Housing (continued)

active in Lewiston offers an alternative, more affordable ownership structure

- Strengthen City support for landlords to enable them to maintain high-quality rental units
 - Sufficient municipal funding for lead testing, bedbugs, other housing quality evaluations and remediation should be allocated to qualifying landlords
 - Regular, formalized communication between landlords and the City (and perhaps the Chamber of Commerce) should be coordinated in order to equalize landlord/City access to relevant information
 - Code enforcement should be oriented around building improvement in a way that reduces negative stigmas and focuses on current priorities; waiving prior violations may serve as a good-will gesture that encourages landlords to participate in bolstered City programs
- Encourage greater owner-occupancy Downtown and efficient building maintenance
 - Downtown buildings and residents stand to benefit from greater on-site management and maintenance, particularly for larger buildings
 - Tenants cite a great appreciation for landlords living in the neighborhood to counter the perceived “absentee landlord” issue
- Organize a support and social network for Downtown tenants to strengthen the sense of community and keep residents informed of important local information
 - ‘New Neighbor’ welcome sessions would assist in orienting new residents to Lewiston and Downtown to provide: tenant training, heighten awareness of local norms, including property management responsibilities, standard terms of rental agreements, and municipal policies
 - A formal structure would offer a forum for communication of local happenings and a channel for coordinating neighborhood social/community-building events
- Explore creative opportunities for rebuilding on vacant lots and occupying condemned, including the following:
 - Rather than taking on the redevelopment of the entire Downtown in one fell swoop, introducing ‘model blocks’ or ‘construction corridors,’ where demolition and rebuilding happen simultaneously in smaller, focused areas, may provide a means of systematically improving the neighborhood street-by-street. Following the improvements on Maple Street, one logical site for a ‘model block’ could be the Bartlett Street Corridor
 - Establish a Redevelopment District that enables the City to oversee the ownership of vacant buildings through requiring a vacant building license, a vacant building plan, fees or fines for non-compliance, as well as eminent domain and acquisition by the City as

needed

- With the presence of a growing arts community in Lewiston, there is an opportunity for quick wins in neighborhood beautification through creatively painting buildings and artistically designing lots, parks, and elements of public spaces

Public Spaces

Open space in the Downtown is well-utilized for kids' recreation and general public gatherings. Ideas for improvements to parks and Downtown streetscapes come from residents' and other stakeholders' interest in improving safety and cleanliness in the neighborhood.

- Maintain grass and landscaping in parks (particularly Paradis Park) so that the spaces can be used for their intended purposes
- Increase programming in Paradis Park and Kennedy Park
 - Parades and cultural events have been cited as old traditions that have faded from Lewiston but that would be beneficial in highlighting the city's diversity
 - Scheduled activities and crafts as well as more general supervision have been suggested as means of reducing youth misbehavior in Paradis Park, which does not have much visibility from the street and tends to be used by neighborhood children who are not supervised by their parents
- Improve sidewalks and introduce more street lights to create safer, more pleasant streetscapes
 - Physical infrastructure investments can expect to yield higher property values and attract more residents and visitors Downtown, in addition to improving the pedestrian experience for current residents

Transportation

Transportation discussions have revolved primarily around the need to better align public transit services with the demands of Citylink's major user groups. Further, conversations addressing parking Downtown have addressed opportunities to match parking supply and demand in the neighborhood.

- Expand public transportation hours to better match employment and other necessary travel schedules for citylink riders
 - Bus services currently start around 6:00am and end by 7:00pm (some conclude closer to 6:00pm); many residents Downtown must travel to and from work outside of these hours, which is particularly challenging for those residents who do not own a car (a significant portion of Downtown residents)
 - Extended hours of existing routes offers one solution for better serving the Downtown population
- Reconfigure public transportation routes to improve access for residents most heavily dependent on public transportation
 - Currently, only one route extends throughout the Downtown neighborhood, despite this area including a large number of households without vehicles (and presumably dependent on citylink for a significant portion of travel)
 - Routes should be reconsidered to reach the populations most in need

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 - Extended hours of existing routes offers one solution for better serving the Downtown population
- Manage neighborhood parking holistically to maximize the value of land uses Downtown
 - Continue to allow street parking and explore whether it can be used to reduce the need for surface parking allocated to residential properties, particularly given the relatively low levels of car ownership in the Downtown neighborhood
 - Parking can be disaggregated from residential units and rented on an as-needed basis rather than being automatically bundled with apartments

Amenities and Services

Downtown Lewiston, particularly along Lisbon Street, was once a thriving urban center. Following a quiet period, storefronts are beginning to be filled again, though a concerted effort needs to be made to become a vibrant urban center. Meanwhile, the range of community and social services available is commendable for the city, but opportunities still exist to better align service offerings and structures with the needs of the community members that they are designed to assist.

- Continue current efforts to improve retail, food and beverage, and other offerings along Lisbon Street and within the Downtown neighborhood
 - Diverse programming within businesses, such as art shows and other public gatherings, can serve as a means of bringing together diverse members of the community
 - Creating ‘pop-up’ spaces in currently empty storefronts presents one idea for attracting members of the Lewiston-Auburn community to the Downtown on an ongoing basis, and offers a space for artists and others who may not have access to retail outlets for selling their products full-time
 - Retail and food and beverage businesses should be encouraged to remain open in the evenings and on weekends so that Lisbon Street can serve as a social destination for college students, Downtown residents, and other members of the Lewiston-Auburn community on a regular basis

Amenities and Services (continued)

- Connect current social services with the most pressing needs within the community
 - Language courses for immigrants currently focus on citizenship, but do not provide sufficient job training or preparation, which warrants revision; such courses can potentially be bolstered by general and computer skills training
 - Educational programs should be established to promote integration within the community, both within schools and as informational programs for local adults
 - Community services for working parents, such as daycare, Lewiston Public Library activities, and the existing Androscoggin Head Start and Child Care (AHSCC) program, should be supplemented by more care options for elementary and middle school-aged children to reduce hindrances to residents' abilities to maintain jobs
- Introduce a new community center Downtown
 - Residents have noted that there is no central, convenient gathering place Downtown; at the same time, landmark buildings, such as St. Patrick's Church on Bates Street next to the Community Concepts building, sit vacant and waiting for use

Relationship with Educational Institutions

- Encourage further physical presence of colleges Downtown
 - Off-campus student housing, studio/work space, and amenities along the route from Bates to Lisbon Street would introduce reasons for students and faculty to spend more time Downtown
- Align community-engaged learning thesis projects and other schools' efforts with community needs
 - Volunteerism can be targeted towards programs and facilities in Downtown Lewiston, such as Adult Education and similar services that require additional resources
- Promote Lewiston community members' attendance at Bates and USM sporting and cultural events
 - Soccer games may be especially popular among Somali immigrant youth
- Continue to draw on the energy and focus of the Bates College administration to activate colleges as a liaison between stakeholder groups in Lewiston
- Build on the relationship with Bates College as a general partnership model for all local higher education institutions (USM Lewiston-Auburn College, Kaplan University, Central Maine Community College)

Additional Feedback

- Invest in connecting Downtown residents with consistent employment
 - English language learning and job preparedness training need to be better aligned with immigrant residents' needs; this could potentially be developed by engaging local college students to assist with programs
 - Simplifying access to services, such as transportation and childcare, should enable Downtown residents to reliably reach work
 - Employment programs that have been successful to-date should be replicated, including the New American Sustainable Agriculture Project, and replicate successful job training programs, such as that implemented by L.L. Bean
 - Create new opportunities for a range of businesses to thrive along Lisbon Street
- Introduce new forums for cross-cultural exchange within the community
 - DNAC and Lots to Gardens have demonstrated creative ways of opening cross-cultural conversation
 - A new community center and programming for a range of residents would help to break down barriers and help residents to understand varying cultural norms
 - Schools offer a forum for lessons in cross-cultural community engagement; breaking down socioeconomic barriers in schools by integrating schools would provide more opportunities for all children in the area
- One potential proposal for revitalizing Downtown is to build a new elementary school in the neighborhood; motivated by a desire to bring more consistent activity to Downtown, encourage a variety of land uses in the neighborhood, and create a more culturally diverse academic setting for all of Lewiston's children.
- Encourage more police foot patrol in lieu of rounds being conducted in cars
 - Time on the ground would give police officers greater familiarity with Downtown residents and a greater ability to recognize high-risk areas in the neighborhood
- Consider the Downtown as the area extending to the river, and plan for neighborhood uses across this geography comprehensively rather than exclusively considering the residential streets of Downtown

DNAC's Role

DNAC is uniquely positioned to be able to bring attention to the varied concerns and interests of stakeholders in Downtown Lewiston. Some of primary areas where DNAC has an opportunity to play a role in improving the neighborhood, and would be well-suited to doing so, include the following recommendations.

- Strengthen or introduce a campaign for local businesses and activities to make downtown more of a destination
- Coordinate across stakeholder groups (the City, residents, landlords, Bates College, etc.) to improve current neighborhood resources and introduce new programs and amenities
- Advocate for Downtown residents in city-wide decision-making



Kennedy Park

Residential Density in Downtown Lewiston

Downtown Lewiston represents a population density that is much greater than Lewiston as a whole. As of the 2010 Census, the Downtown area's population was 13,313, which consisted of 2,300 families (5,266 households), and accounted for 36% of Lewiston's total population (Census 2010). According to a Lewiston Housing Study published in 2002, the Downtown's population density was over five times greater than that of Lewiston overall (5,400 persons per square mile vs. 1,000 per square mile based on the 2000 Census). Residential density has since increased, with an average of 6,040 persons per square mile in the downtown census tracts, while Lewiston's overall density remained at approximately 1,070 according to Census 2010.

Residential Zoning

The majority of the Downtown is dedicated to residential uses and is zoned accordingly. Most of the area is zoned as "Downtown Residential," and the 50' x 100' lots that dominate the neighborhood are consistent with this arrangement. "Downtown Residential" also refers, in part, to zoning that preserves historic building stock while allowing for the elimination of blighted buildings and the creation of more open spaces to lower residential density of the area.

Zoning currently allows up to 34 units per acre for multi-family residences. The Lewiston Zoning Code makes an exception, however, for development that has 25% of its units structured as affordable for low to middle income residents or combines affordable units and incentives for owner occupancy. The Lewiston assessor's office estimates that the Downtown currently contains 1,815 dwelling units, ranging from single-family homes to apartment buildings that contain 20 or more individual units (Census 2010).

Looking more closely, housing density in the Downtown is as follows:

- Bartlett Street (Adams Avenue to Sabattus Street): 42 units per acre in 2013 (*before the fires*)

- Horton Street (Adams Avenue to Sabattus Street): 27 units per acre in 2013
- Maple Street (Lisbon to Blake): 40 units per acre *(or 27 units per acre if including the buildings on Blake St at the end of Maple St)*

Residents tend to identify both Maple Street and Horton Street as appealing examples of Downtown density and could serve as target range of density for future developments. As the City moves forward, it will be helpful to have both a benchmark for maximum density per specific development and in the neighborhood overall. As part of a potential inclusionary zoning policy, the City could utilize density markers to offer bonuses to specific developments while maintaining an appropriate density for the neighborhood or even on a street by street basis, consistent with a “model block” or corridor based strategy for revitalization.

Discussions with members of the community indicate that there is an interest in lowering the density in the Downtown residential area east of Lisbon Street. Some individuals note that higher-density residential planning is better suited for the mill buildings along Canal Street, where mixed-use development has already begun; new homes built in the Downtown area around Kennedy Park and “Midtown” would be better suited to residential units stacked no higher than two or three units atop one another. This would allow for a more even pattern of development Downtown, rather than a pattern of 30-unit buildings intermingled with slow-to-develop empty lots.

Non-Residential Zoning

Some portion of the Downtown is zoned for non-residential uses, as can be seen by the shops and amenities that are scattered throughout the DNAC study area. The neighborhood additionally has several “historic districts” that overlay the area, including a “Downtown Development District” that was created by the City of Lewiston as part of its 1996 Comprehensive Plan. The District is part of a historic conservation effort, and its regulatory structure applies to parcels that front Pine Street, Ash Street, and Park Street. Some structures within Kennedy Park also fall under the purview of historic conservation regulation. Small portions of the neighborhood abutting Bartlett and Adams are zoned as “Highway Business,” which reinforces the discontinuity that exists between the residential fabric and nearby industrial areas.

Zoning pertaining to parking is very restrictive and has not been adapted over time. New residential development requires 1-2 parking spaces per unit; given limited vacant land in the downtown area, this can be a deterrent to new construction.



Area identified as best-suited for high-density housing

housing





Housing Typology and Tenure Mix

Downtown Lewiston contains a variety of housing types and a high concentration of rental units; these trends in tenure and typology differ from the city as a whole.

In 2002, the Downtown area contained over 50% of Lewiston's total housing units (approximately 1415 units); by 2010, the number dropped to 36% of the city's total units (2010 Census). Though Downtown has seen a decrease in its percentage of housing across Lewiston, the number of units in Downtown has nonetheless increased to approximately 1815 units (according to the Lewiston Assessor's office).

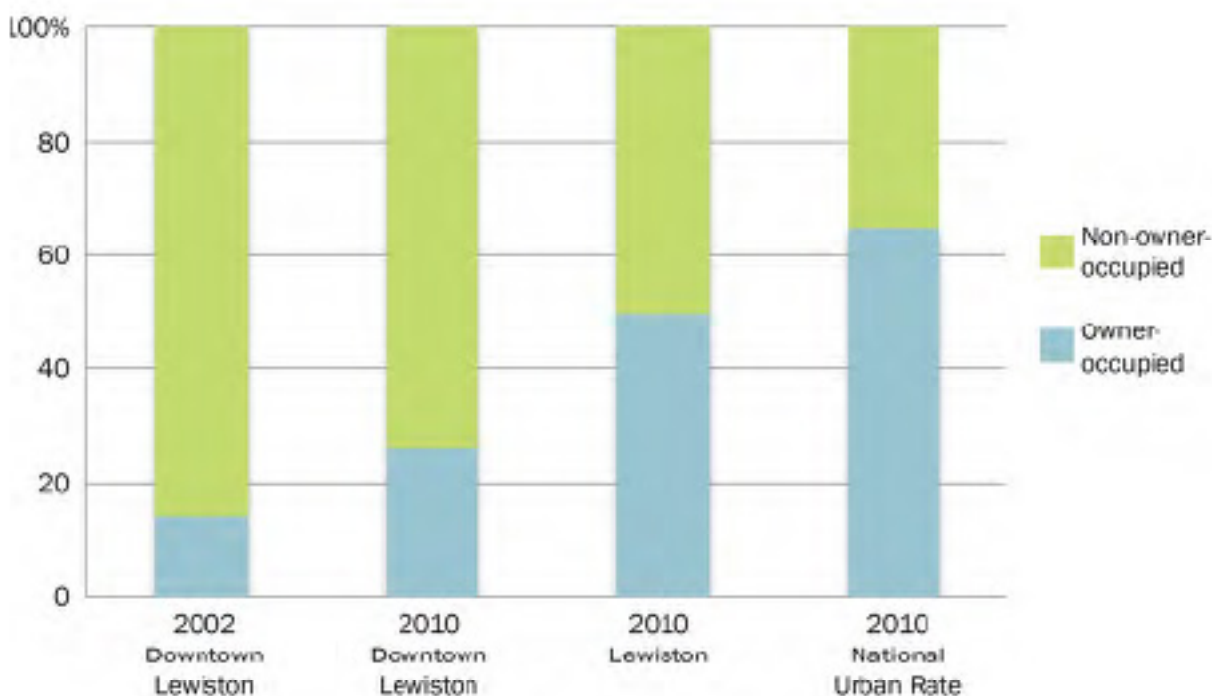
Housing

Housing Typology and Tenure Mix (continued)

Of the units in existence in 2002, very few (14%) were owner-occupied. This number has increased in recent years: in 2010, 26% of occupied units were owner-occupied. Still, the figure differs notably from the 50% owner-occupancy rate for housing in Lewiston as a whole; it is also significantly lower than the national rate of owner occupancy in urban areas, which currently sits at 65% (HOFINET). Many members of the community believe that a greater rate of homeownership would benefit Downtown both socially and economically. Ownership promises greater stability within the neighborhood, raising the quality of properties and ultimately increasing

the economic value of Downtown homes. Recently-built homes on Blake Street that promote ownership for low-income families have been highly successful, indicating that the market is ready for more of this type of development. When interviewed, Lewiston residents often cite the Blake Street homes for their appealing building style as an example of appropriate density for Lewiston's downtown.

A complicating factor in regards to homeownership is that conventional forms of lending in the U.S. are inconsistent with cultural norms within the Somali immigrant population. Sharia-compliant strategies that allow Muslim residents to access capital for a home purchase have been explored, and



Residential tenure

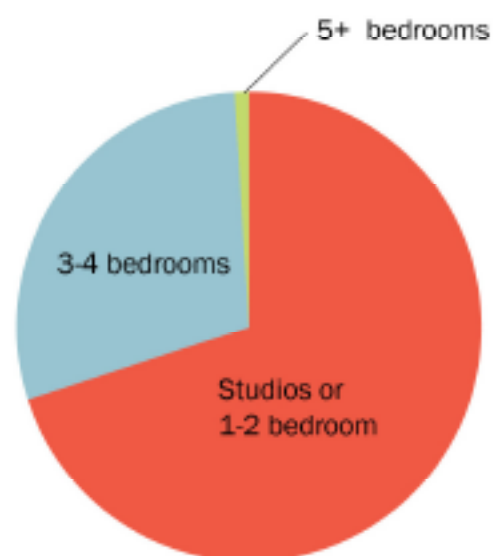
appear to be a constructive way to allow families to remain in the area but to own their homes. Expanding these programs and exploring other creative means of accessing capital (such as cooperative ownership or community land trusts) would provide the Downtown with a means of increasing quality, value, and social capital within the neighborhood.

In 2002, the majority of buildings in the Downtown were multi-family homes or apartment buildings. At that time, 70% of buildings contained between three and nine units; 60% of units contained one or two bedrooms, and 40% contained three or more bedrooms. Currently, 70% of units are studios or one-to-two-bedroom units; 29% contain three or four bedrooms, and only 1% contain five bedrooms. The Lewiston Housing Authority's Director, Jim Dowling, estimates that the current number of one-to-two-bedroom units is sufficient, but the market needs more three-to-four-bedroom units. Residents agree: many note that larger units are in demand to accommodate families that are currently crowded into small rental units. The fires in the spring of 2013 destroyed a sizeable number of larger units, forcing families into overcrowded or equally unsafe apartments.

Building heights in areas similar to Lewiston vary according to their specific locations within residential or more business-oriented districts. In more walkable neighborhoods such as Lewiston's downtown, building heights should preferably remain approximately 30-50 feet (or three stories) to create a pleasurable and friendly experience for pedestrians (City of Portland). Current building heights and street character in Lewiston are restricted to 60 feet, while

higher building heights could be utilized as a developer incentive and approved on a case-by-case basis by community residents and pending the inclusion of affordable housing. The recent construction of several single family homes in the Downtown have been cited by residents as unsuccessful in the typical downtown fabric. Moving forward, the City should offer specific regulations for single family home construction such as closer setbacks to the sidewalk, smaller lot size, or other zoning requirements to encourage a denser, active residential streetscape.

Given the demand for units in the Downtown and a lack of availability and affordability of appropriately sized units, the City would benefit greatly from an inclusionary zoning policy to aid in the design of future developments. Inclusionary zoning takes a wide range of forms and in robust housing markets such as Boston, zoning is effective in requiring developers to build in affordable units at a rate of 10 - 15% of the entire building. The inclusionary zoning policy can be



Unit sizes in Downtown residences

made more flexible by allowing developers to build the affordable units off site, contribute funds towards future affordable housing projects, or to use differing standards of what constitutes “affordable” housing according to area median income (Department of Housing and Urban Development).

In Lewiston, inclusionary zoning makes most sense to be utilized for projects that involve city support (land, tax incentive financing, etc) rather than independent development. This achieves the goal of bringing more market rate housing to downtown while maintaining affordability for current residents. Though residents and landlords in the past have expressed concern over the negative impact of affordable housing, a variety of research on housing demonstrates that when affordable housing is integrated strategically as part of mixed-income development, neighborhoods are strengthened and property values are not

negatively affected. When affordable housing units are thoughtfully designed, inclusive of a broad spectrum of residents and incomes, and properly maintained, units can be integrated into the existing neighborhood fabric effectively (Center for Housing Policy, Habitat for Humanity, Shelterforce).

Housing Age and Vacant Buildings

The age and condition of housing stock in the Downtown is of notable concern to residents and civic leaders alike. As of 2009, 90% of Downtown housing was built before 1970, compared with 77% in the city of Lewiston overall. The age of buildings has contributed to a deterioration of quality in many buildings, which arises as a topic of conversation with many members of the community.

Current vacancy rates of the downtown are



Blake Street condominiums

estimated to fall in the range of 10 - 15%. According to the 2010 Census, Lewiston's overall vacancy rate was 9.3%, while the rate Downtown was 13.4%.

Eighty-six of the 102 buildings on the city's list of "distressed" properties are located Downtown. The list includes buildings that have been condemned or are considered to be vacant or abandoned; many are multi-family buildings with an assessed value of \$90,000 or less (Lewiston-Auburn Sun Journal, June 2013; Portland Press Herald, 2013). Each demolition costs \$10,000 - \$15,000, or up to \$25,000 for a five-unit building. The City funds each demolition, and works with the Code Enforcement Office and the Lewiston Fire Department to contain the debris and other negative impacts on neighboring properties.

The intended plans for sites of condemned or recently-demolished buildings is not clear: some members of the community predict that when large or multiple contiguous parcels open up through demolition, the city will combine these to enable the development of large multi-family housing structures. Other citizens believe that the city is strategically condemning buildings so as to reduce downtown density and allow for more open space and larger lot sizes in the Downtown. One citizen mentioned the idea of a "blight fee" that he believes would deter property owners from allowing their buildings to fall into disrepair. Another individual involved in housing suggested that new development on vacant lots should focus on lower-density duplexes that offer larger units for sale, rather than replacing decaying 30-unit buildings with similarly large structures. To solve the blight problem, several community members suggested that responsibility for vacant lots

could be taken on by owners of neighboring land, to enable community members or groups to repurpose vacant land. Another active downtown resident suggested that demolition can cause great anxiety among community members, as adjoining tenants become increasingly concerned that their building may be the next designated for removal.

It is largely agreed that greater coordination around the City's demolition process is needed. Perception amongst residents remains that buildings are sometimes taken down without apparent reasons. In spite of the public process regarding buildings' preservation or demolition, residents suggest that the process for selecting properties for potential rehab lacks clearly articulated criteria. In addition, many residents yearn for a better understanding of the often-complex process of land ownership as it exists in Lewiston – foreclosure, bank ownership, tax liens – and how such real estate details relate to city planning. Compiling such data – and making the information legible and accessible – would be a welcome step towards increasing trust and engagement in the community.

While there is not currently any movement for a publicly-owned land bank, some residents suggest that consolidating underutilized and vacant land would better allow strategic, coordinated use of the land. By collecting land under one owner, the city can resolve confusing land ownership issues and remove encumbrances that would add legal costs for potential developers.

Housing Affordability

Housing stock in the Downtown is largely subsidized, due in part to the already-low rent rates there compared with the region as a whole. Current fair market rents in Androscoggin County are noted in the following table:

Unit type	Androscoggin County fair market rent
Studio	\$475 / month
1-bedroom	\$575 / month
2-bedroom	\$727 / month
4-bedroom	\$1020 / month

In comparison, median rent paid in the City of Lewiston is \$656 monthly; median rent in the Downtown area is \$565, which sits below the county average for a 1-bedroom unit. Nonetheless, as of 2009, it was estimated that 61% of residents in Lewiston were unable to afford the median cost of a two-bedroom apartment; a similar number of residents were also deemed unable to afford the purchase of a median-priced home. Across the city, an estimated 40% (or more) of renters are currently paying at least 35% of their monthly income on housing costs.

Affordability measures are substantial in the Downtown, where 60% of units are estimated to be subsidized. As of October 2013, according to the Lewiston Housing Authority, Lewiston has 1111 Section 8 Vouchers. Of these, 694 (62%) are utilized in the downtown census tracts, thus accounting for 12% of the Downtown's housing units. Unfortunately, the number of Section 8 Vouchers has declined in the past couple of years: the current total is approximately 130 fewer than were available in 2011, and as of May 2013, no new vouchers had been

made available in over eight months. It is approximated that more than 1000 people are waiting for housing vouchers in the City of Lewiston.

The issue of affordability raises many differing concerns among stakeholders Downtown. Landlords are concerned about government-operated or subsidized affordable units cutting into the private market: as new buildings have opened, such as Birch Hill, qualifying tenants have moved out of privately-operated rental buildings. Landlords have been forced to charge very low rents to fill vacant units, and have been left with less reliable tenants. As a result, they are less able to complete necessary maintenance and upkeep in their buildings, thus perpetuating the cycle of declining quality of housing stock in the Downtown.

Landlords have organized to contest the building of new affordable housing, arguing that the construction of such units undermines competition within the private market and has led to an overabundance of affordable units Downtown. The City has supported new construction of affordable units, however, because they can be built quickly (relative to private development Downtown) and are generally better maintained than lower-cost units that exist in the private market. Multiple landlords describe a strategy of removing old buildings to improve the private market, which would perhaps make the co-existence of private, market-rate units and city-operated affordable units easier.

One young professional who owns a home Downtown noted an interesting outcome of the high rate of subsidized housing there: when she was looking to move Downtown, she had trouble finding a home because her

income was too high for her to qualify for many of the units available. She believes that other young professionals would be interested in living Downtown, but that they may have similar challenges finding homes that are of high quality and are available to households that do not qualify for housing assistance.

In contrast, the many low-income residents of the Downtown benefit from the extension of affordable housing programs. The combined effect of cuts in Section 8 vouchers and condemnation of units can make the private rental market increasingly difficult to access. Research on affordable housing developments strongly suggests that such developments' effect on property values and social indicators is dependent on three key factors: type of neighborhood, size of development, and management of development. The most effective affordable housing developments, which tend to generate significant positive effects on the community and no negative effects on property values, are affordable housing developments in depressed or blighted areas and managed by owners with a long time-frame (usually non-profits). Metropolitan areas typically encourage affordable housing that is available to residents earning up to 60%, 80%, or 120% of area median income. HUD currently reports Lewiston's area median income as \$56,100 for a family of four, so affordability measures should be determined from this base. Depending on the size of the development, the number of units dedicated to each income bracket can be allocated based on need. This suggests that Lewiston's Downtown residents and landlords could benefit significantly from well-managed affordable housing developments.

A research synthesis from Arizona State University suggests that where affordable housing units "replace depressed conditions" or are instituted as part of a regeneration program, they tend to generate positive impacts on the surrounding community; Minnesota housing's research synthesis agrees with this and states that affordable housing projects generate the most value when replacing vacant lots or distressed properties.

In addition, concerns about the effect of affordable housing developments on the local private property market may be unfounded. The ASU research suggests that large-scale affordable housing projects in depopulated and/or distressed urban and suburban neighborhoods tend to generate positive effects on property values in the area, by improving the neighborhood aesthetics and welfare as a whole. (This does not seem to be the case for small-scale developments). The Institute for Urban and Regional Development



Multi-family housing in need of maintenance

at UC Berkeley determined that proximity to affordable housing has no significant effect on sales prices of properties. California's Department of Housing and Community Development has similarly found that the majority of studies show no significant negative effects of subsidized housing developments on the value of neighboring properties. A more recent research review in the Journal of Planning Literature concludes that, even where negative price effects of affordable housing do exist, they are very small in comparison to other factors that affect property values.

Landlord and Tenant Concerns

Tensions between landlords and tenants create ongoing conflict Downtown, which is of particular concern given the high concentration of rental units in the neighborhood.

Rental housing landlords struggle with inadequate equity in their properties to invest properly, and as such, many issues with maintenance and code enforcement emerge Downtown. Jeff Baril, code enforcement officer for the city, states that landlords are often "overextended or inexperienced." Landlords who are forced to take in unreliable tenants at low rent rates feel that they are unable to keep up with high fees for services in the city, let alone required maintenance of their buildings. In turn, the City's ability to regulate property is frustrated when it is confronted with the risk of a landlord's imminent bankruptcy or the eviction of tenants.

One landlord had more positive feedback for

the City, describing the resources available for required maintenance (such as lead removal) as sufficient and mentioning that the Code Enforcement Office has been very helpful. He is interested in seeing the Code Enforcement Office take over more derelict buildings and tear them down to improve property quality across the city. This landlord lives in one of the buildings that he owns; based on conversations with others, it seems likely that landlord accountability is directly related to presence Downtown. Landlords who live in the buildings where they rent units received the most positive reviews.

Tenant reliability concerns landlords for multiple reasons. First, landlords who feel that they must rent at very low rates frequently do not receive timely rent payments and ultimately see high turnover rates; such patterns reduce revenue streams that landlords receive, and may entangle them in eviction battles. Second, many landlords cite negative experiences with tenants who have housed too many people in their units and have significantly damaged units. Some describe immigrant families specifically as having left units with major water damage and other problems beyond typical wear and tear. Landlords and business owners alike mentioned concerns about tenants' poor property upkeep during conversations with them; observations of trash around properties were noted repeatedly.

Tenants also have concerns about their living situations, including both the conditions of their residential units and the treatment that they receive from landlords. Poor unit quality and landlord respect for tenants emerged in discussion; tenants feel that landlords can and should be more courteous and more responsive to basic maintenance issues.

Interviews with tenants, landlords, and business owners highlight a potential need for greater coordination between groups. Some Downtown landlords currently are part of the Lewiston/Auburn Landlords Association, while others choose not to participate in this group, and therefore may not receive valuable information that is disseminated during meetings and through association communication. As a group, landlords would benefit from clearer access to information from the City and other relevant sources about how they may more effectively maintain quality residential properties. For example, one landlord feels that the City has effectively provided funding for removing lead from his buildings; others may qualify for the same support but are not familiar with how to obtain it. Instead, they have continued to operate buildings that do not comply with health and safety codes.

Tenants, too, would benefit from greater organization in the Downtown. Providing households with an understanding of their rights and responsibilities would, ideally, help to avoid some of the conflicts that have arisen previously and have, in some cases, led to legal action. In particular, several conversations with tenants, landlords, and local business owners alike indicated that there is a disconnect between immigrant families' understanding and landlords' expectations about care for property, waste management, and related issues. Development of a 'good neighbor' training program would likely be useful, therefore, as a means of communicating local residential norms and closing the gap between landlord and tenant understandings about each group's respective responsibilities. Basic forms of this type of intervention have

been used in places such as Siler City, North Carolina, where an influx of Latino immigrants began to change the dynamics of a small town. There, brief, friendly home visits from the Code Enforcement Officer, who was accompanied by a Spanish-speaking member of the community, reduced incidents of furniture and waste in lawns and other local code violations [American Radio Works]. A similar educational effort would likely yield positive results in Lewiston.

Public Spaces

Parks

Downtown Lewiston is fortunate to have multiple parks and open spaces that are greatly enjoyed by the community and serve a variety of purposes. Through the work of the Visible Community and other community members, physical improvements have contributed to a growing sense of safety and amenities in the downtown parks. Community members relay the need for park maintenance to keep the areas in good condition, as well as the desire to increase programming and encourage citizens to gather there. Kennedy Park, named after the nation's 35th President following his assassination, has been historically used for political, cultural, and social events and is a central gathering place for the downtown community. The park's bandstand, constructed in 1925, is integral to the park and has seen several restorations over time. Local groups have made efforts to resurrect and relocate the bandstand and to replace its roof, mainly due to safety concerns involving erosion and use. City Councilors have given a local group until June 2014 to raise funds to rebuild the bandstand. As a historical landmark, it is important to community members that the bandstand be re-opened for use and maintained properly to ensure the safety of the structure.

Kennedy Park is cherished for its varied uses and centrality. Recent improvements to the park, particularly increased lighting, have been well received by the community. One resident noted that more trash cans in the park might help reduce the amount of litter. The same community member, a longtime Lewiston resident, suggested the need for increased community programming and cited pleasant memories of parades and gatherings in the park in the past.

Nearby Paradis Park is also heavily used, primarily by neighborhood youth who play soccer there. The park's quickly worn grass is a sign both of the park's frequent use for play and the need for continued investment in appropriate landscaping. The large numbers of children in the park has prompted some neighborhood concern, primarily by business owners, around supervision of the youth while in the park to ensure safety and proper behavior. One resulting recommendation is to introduce structured programming or supervision in the park to facilitate activities and ensure safety.

Streetscapes

Community members and recent studies of the downtown cite the need for streetscape improvements in order to create a clearer pedestrian network. The recommendations included here are consistent with those of the Lewiston Downtown Traffic Circulation Study, completed in August 2013. The Study references the work of several previous studies on circulation in Downtown and makes pertinent recommendations on sidewalks and streetscapes. As the Study notes, the downtown is largely lacking in a clear pedestrian network, due in part to wide streets without clear directions for motorists, bicyclists, or pedestrians. As such, the study emphasizes the need for improved signage for cars and lane designations on downtown's roads in order to clarify where vehicles and bicycles can safely proceed. Recommendations to slow cars and improve the pedestrian experience include the "bumpouts" that make crossing clearer and simpler for pedestrians and are already in effect along Walnut Street.

The recent streetscape improvements along Walnut Street offer inspiration for similar investment and improvements along downtown streets to improve overall design and walkability. While some community members are unclear about the utility of the selected design elements (e.g., widened sidewalks, corner curb bump-outs), they nonetheless point to the City's investment in Walnut Street as an example of the type of improvements that could continue to be adjusted and made elsewhere in the downtown.

Community members generally cite two main ways to make the streetscape Downtown more attractive and comfortable for residents and visitors. First, investment in sidewalks: Residents with limited mobility would benefit from more consistent sidewalk heights for pedestrian or wheelchair access, ideally eliminating the tendency for residents to walk in the street to avoid difficult to navigate sidewalks. Second, business owners and residents are interested in seeing more streetlights Downtown, as they believe this will increase safety in the area at night.

Significant technology improvements have emerged in municipal street lighting in recent years and many cities are taking on street lighting projects and retrofits to increase public safety, beautification, and efficiency. For example, as of October 2013, New York City's traditional streetlights are being replaced with LED bulbs that last up to 20 years and offer a whiter light than the "orange glow" of past street lighting conventions (New York Times, October 2013).

General street lighting design practices suggest that for a pedestrian scale, street lights should be no more than 20 feet tall [Boston Complete Streets Guidelines, July 2011] and generally within the range of 12 - 16 feet above the sidewalk. In residential areas, guidelines dictate that pole spacing should be between 100 and 120 feet apart, while in commercial areas, this may be reduced to 60 - 90 feet. Given the density of Lewiston's downtown and its mixed-use character (and the general desire for continued mixed use in the downtown), pole spacing that approximates the commercial guidelines could be practical to offer greater illumination and encourage the perception of Downtown as a pleasant and safe place to be at all hours (Department of Environmental Service, City of Arlington).

transportation +



A purple citylink bus is parked in front of a green building with a balcony. The bus has yellow oval markings along its side and the word 'citylink' in white and yellow. The building has a green metal frame and a balcony with a metal railing.

parking

Vehicle Ownership and Commuting Patterns

Downtown Lewiston's patterns of vehicle ownership and commuting to work differ from those across the city as a whole. Generally speaking, Downtown households tend to own fewer cars, and therefore are less likely to commute to work as single drivers, patterns which should influence the system of public transportation and parking in Lewiston.

citylink bus operating in Downtown Lewiston

Transportation + Parking

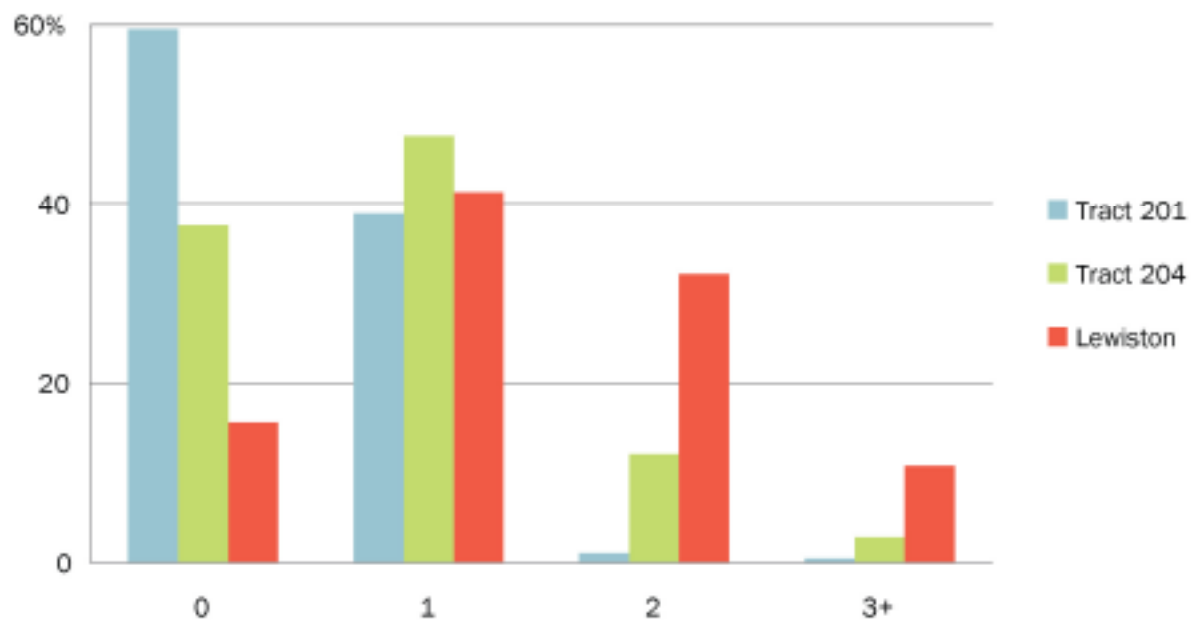
Vehicle Ownership and Commuting Patterns (continued)

Data from the American Community Survey (2011) suggests that almost all Downtown households have fewer than two cars, with a large proportion not owning any vehicles.

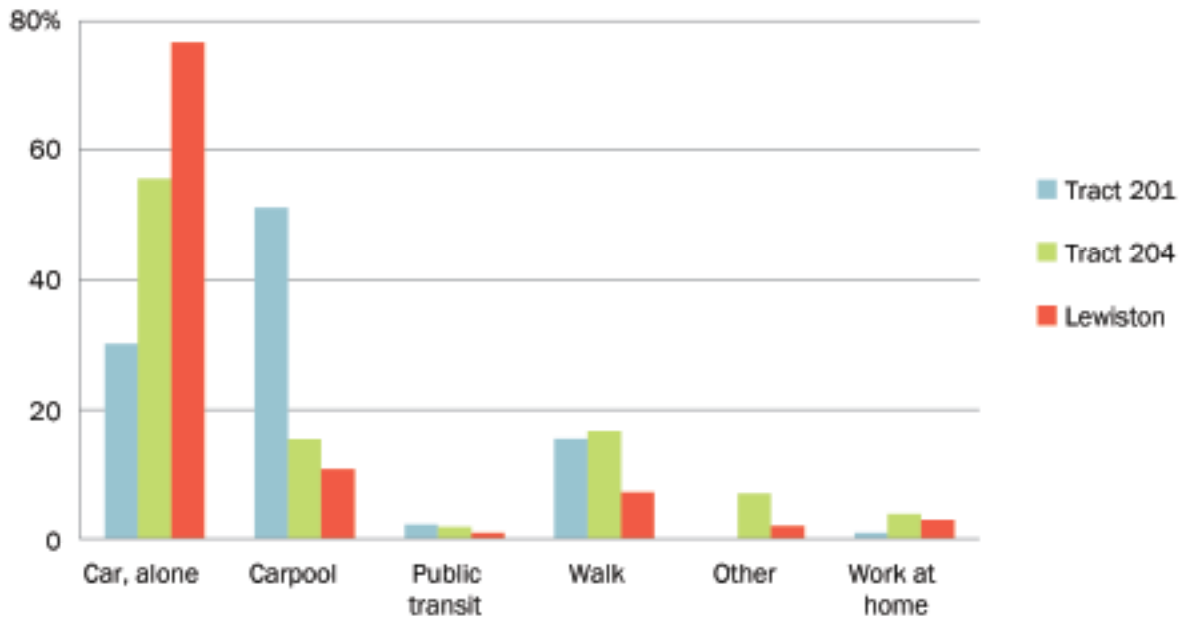
The graph below gives a rough indication of current vehicle ownership patterns in census tracts 201 and 204, which together roughly correspond to the Downtown area (tract 201 extends further North and tract 204 further East and South than the Downtown area). Nonetheless the general trend of low vehicle possession is illustrated by the data.

In addition, the graph on the facing page on modes of transit used by residents to commute to work suggests that, compared with Lewiston as a whole, a relatively small proportion of Downtown residents drive themselves to their jobs. This pattern likely stems from vehicle ownership trends: without access to cars, individuals must rely on others for rides or on public transportation.

These data on vehicle access and Downtown residents' reliance on a variety of modes of transportation for commuting to work should inform the City's decisions about the design of public transportation and parking.



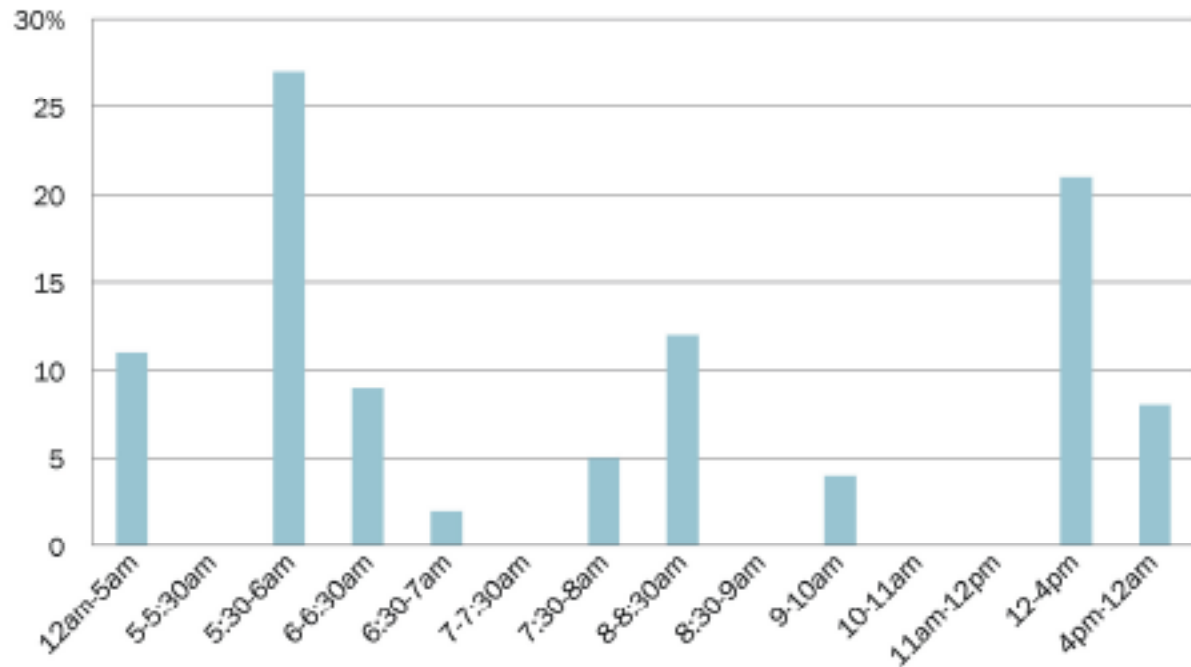
Vehicle ownership in Lewiston (cars per household)



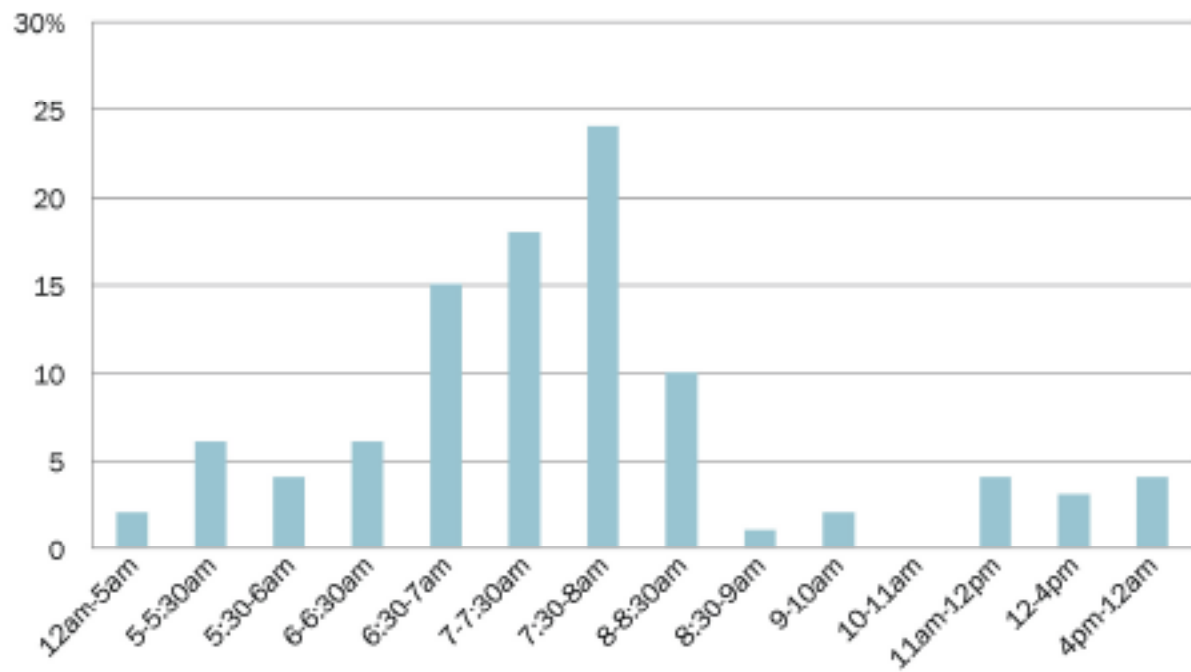
Modes of commuting to work in Lewiston

Public Transportation

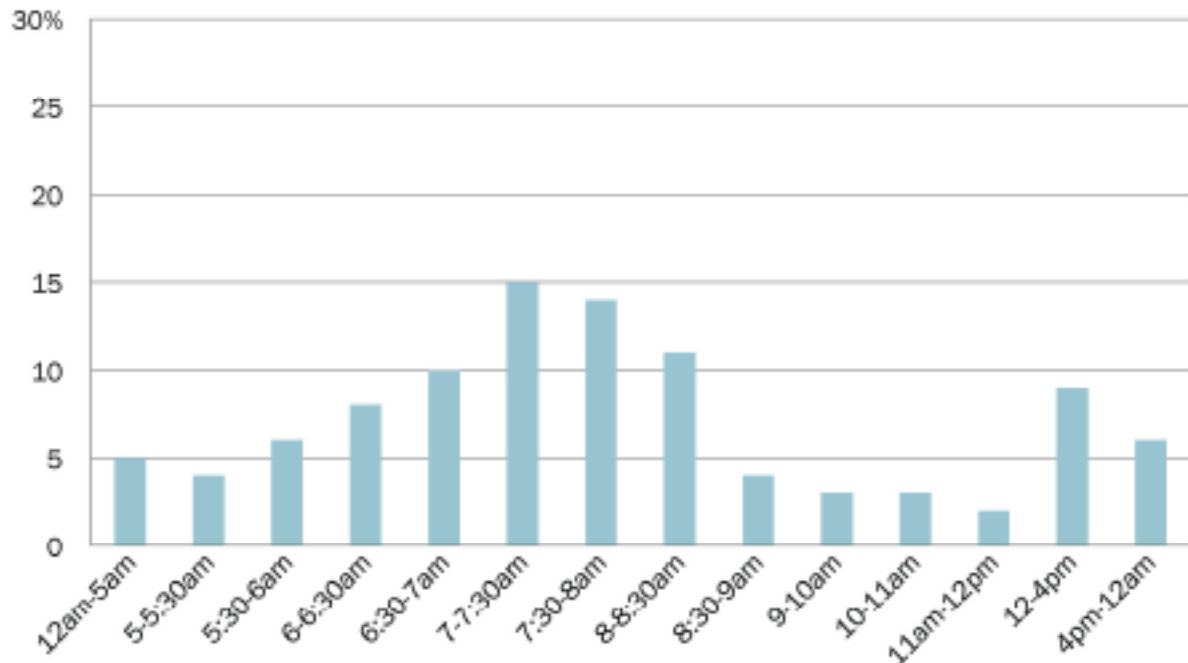
Public transportation is top-of-mind for Downtown Lewiston residents. Low rates of vehicle ownership increases reliance on public transit for this group, and current citylink services likely pose challenges for residents whose jobs require early or late hours. Over 10% of workers in Tract 201 leave for work before 5:00am, and another 25% depart between 5:00am and 6:00am; this is before buses have started running. Because nearly 60% of households in this census tract do not own vehicles, commuting to a job outside of a walkable distance becomes complicated early in the morning and late at night. This raises questions about whether Downtown residents can access jobs for which they currently qualify.



Census tract 201 patterns of resident time of departure for work



Census tract 204 patterns of resident time of departure for work



Lewiston overall patterns of resident time of departure for work

The People's Downtown Master Plan (2008), developed by Visible Community, listed its goal of "expanding affordable public transportation" as its highest priority. According to the Master Plan, public transportation is in demand for work, grocery and food pantry access, socializing, and other outings.

The existing transportation system provides residents with downtown shuttles and inter-city transfers between Lewiston and Auburn; it has certain weaknesses, however, that warrant improvement:

- Limited operating hours
- An absence of stops in Downtown residential neighborhoods
- Inconvenient routes
- A lack of long-term pass options

Recommendations for citylink in the 2008 Master Plan included:

- Clearly marked bus stops that include a covered waiting area, bench and route schedule and map
- Additional stops in the Downtown residential area (including service to the B Street Community Center, the Multi-Purpose Center, and the Sisters of Charity Food Pantry)
- Additional bus service to Auburn shopping destinations (including Family Dollar and Big Lots) and to Country Lane Homes and Hillview
- Extended operating hours (after 5:00 pm and on weekends)

Looking at the existing bus system, routes still appear fragmented, with only the Lisbon Street route running through the core of the Downtown area. For residents with limited mobility in particular, reaching the Oak Street bus station to access different routes may therefore be a challenging process. Further, most citylink routes conclude service around 6:00pm, and none of the routes operate on Sundays, which does not accommodate residents without cars who must commute to work or other destinations in the evening or on weekends. This is particularly relevant for the many Downtown residents who work irregular hours. Interviews with residents suggest that inability to get to work limits employment opportunities significantly. We have also heard several examples of people who have to take taxis both ways to work as the public transit system only operates during conventional working hours.

Given the need for Downtown residents to be able to access jobs and services outside of their neighborhood, it is important for citylink to expand operating hours in the evening and the weekend (and, potentially, to extend the frequency of bus arrival times) and to consider reconfiguring routes in order to allow residents who depend most heavily on public transportation to reach necessary destinations. During conversations with residents, destinations that emerged as being of particular importance, and deserving of improved public transportation access, include:

- Bates College and other employment hubs
- B Street Health Center (Birch Street)
- St. Mary's Hospital/Regional Medical Center (Sabattus and Campus Streets)

- Big Lots (Center Street, Auburn)
- Additional medical centers, retail destinations, and social services that are frequented by Downtown residents, particularly seniors and residents without cars

Bus routes have been improved greatly since the People's Master Plan, and ridership steadily climbed for 3 years. The most pressing issues right now are expanding hours and days of operation, expanding routes to go further to other cities, and decreasing headways from 1-hour to 30 minutes. A new route study is in the queue for the Lewiston-Auburn Transit Committee, which oversees operation of the route. It should be noted that currently, Lewiston-Auburn spends the least amount of local dollars per rider compared to other cities in Maine. It will take increases in funding from council just to maintain service, and even more to achieve any of these improvements.

Certainly, additions to citylink services have economic implications that merit a more detailed financial analysis. At a high level, however, the types of improvements recommended in this report are believed to not only constitute necessary public services, but should also demonstrate economic benefits: Downtown Lewiston has a concentrated population that has high demand for public transportation, which should economically support extensions to service. Its high population density (see chapter 4 on Density) relative to other parts of the Lewiston-Auburn metropolis means that each stop there serves a much larger number of people than any given stop elsewhere does. Moreover, the Downtown is one of the lowest-income neighborhoods in Lewiston-Auburn, which means that its residents have less

access to private transportation options and must rely on public transportation access. From an equity and economics perspective, Downtown citizens should be prioritized in public transit planning.

In addition, interviews with city officials suggest that a priority for the Downtown residential neighborhood is for it to become a more mixed-income neighborhood. This relies on making the Downtown a more desirable

place to live. Interviews with non-Downtown Lewiston residents suggest that improved public transportation is a major factor in this. Federal funding in the form of formula grants and competitive grants is available for the types of transit improvements recommended here; specific opportunities that deserve exploration are noted in the following table.



Sites noted by residents as requiring greater public transit access

PROGRAM TITLE	BRIEF DESCRIPTION
FORMULA GRANTS	
Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ)	Funds projects that reduce congestion and improve air quality. Projects can include bicycle, pedestrian and transit facilities.
Formula Grants for other than Urbanized Areas (49 U.S.C. § 5311)	Provides capital and operating assistance grants to States to support public transportation in rural areas with population of less than 50,000. Also includes funding for Tribal Transit.
Rural Transit Assistance Program (49 U.S.C. § 5311 (b) (3))	Training, technical assistance, research, and related support services in rural areas.
Transportation for Elderly Persons and Persons with Disabilities (49 U.S.C. § 5310)	Formula funding to States to assist private nonprofit groups in meeting transportation needs of the elderly and persons with disabilities.
Job Access and Reverse Commute Program (49 U.S.C. § 5316)	Funding to address transportation challenges faced by welfare recipients and low-income persons seeking to obtain and maintain employment.
New Freedom Program (49 U.S.C. § 5317)	Formula grant that provides tools and resources to reduce barriers to transportation services and expand the transportation mobility options available to people with disabilities.
Medicaid Non-Emergency Transportation	Provides funds for Medicaid recipients to obtain transportation to and from medical providers for non-emergency services.
COMPETITIVE GRANTS	
Bus and Bus Facilities (49 U.S.C. § 5309)	Funds new and replacement buses and facilities. Includes bus livability and state of good repair funds.
Transportation Investments Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER)	Fosters innovative, multimodal and multi-jurisdictional transportation projects that promise significant economic and environmental benefits to an entire metropolitan area, a region, or the nation.
Major Capital Investments (New Starts and Small Starts)	Funds new or extensions to existing fixed guideway and bus rapid transit systems.
Veterans Transportation and Community Living Initiative Grant Program	Inter-departmental initiative to improve transportation options and mobility for America's veterans, service members, and their families.
Public Transportation on Indian Reservations (49 U.S.C. § 5311 (C))	Direct funding to federally recognized tribes for the purpose of supporting tribal public transportation in rural areas.
American Reinvestment and Recovery Act (ARRA)	Stimulus or recovery funds appropriated in 2009. Funding was geared toward job preservation and creation, infrastructure investment and other uses.

Federal grant programs available to support transportation investments

Parking

The most recent parking report produced in Lewiston was released in 1998. The report focused primarily on the commercial part of the Downtown (Lisbon Street and Canal Street), and not the residential neighborhood. These areas currently contain several large parking garages (which frequently appear to be entirely empty on weekends).

Currently, zoning Downtown requires each housing unit to be built with two parking spaces, which is on the high end of the range generally expected in urban areas (for example, Boston's parking requirements range from 0.5 - 1.5 spaces per residential unit, depending on the neighborhood and proximity to public transportation) (Boston Transportation Department). Although interviews with city officials suggest that this requirement is sometimes relaxed, there still appears to be a surfeit of parking in the Downtown. In addition, minimum parking requirements increase the cost of development (both by reducing land available for development and because of the cost of creating the parking lot).

High off-street parking requirements can be problematic if unused. Parking lots can be unattractive, and are less safe than designated fields or parks for children to play in. Using the land between housing units for parking rather than gathering spaces can reduce opportunities for community interaction. In addition, parking lots can take up space that could be used for residential dwellings or public spaces.

Because of the low vehicle ownership rates and dependence on public transportation Downtown, as well as the recent change

allowing street parking in winter, several options that align with national and international parking policies and management best practices seem viable for generating greater value from Downtown land that is currently dedicated to parking:

Eliminate minimum off-street residential parking requirements and encourage developers and landlords to 'unbundle' parking and provide it at a cost that is separate from the cost of residential units. The majority of downtown households own one car or no cars; the minimum off-street parking requirements could be adjusted to reflect this. The Institute for Transportation and Development Policy recommends eliminating minimum parking requirements and encouraging developers to 'unbundle' parking and provide it at a cost that is separate from the cost of the residential unit. It is costly for developers to set aside space for parking and to develop a parking lot. This cost is incorporated into the cost of the housing units (either to buy or rent). When minimum parking requirements are too high, residents therefore are forced to pay for parking that they do not need.

Align on- and off-street parking management to consider overall supply of parking spaces Downtown, rather than accounting for individual residential properties' parking allocations separately.

Coordinate shared parking between Downtown uses that are active during different times of the day or week. For example, businesses' parking lots may not be full during evenings and weekends, and so should be made available for use by residents or visitors to Downtown. According to the ITDP report, 'The promotion of 'shared

parking,’ whereby developers coordinate access to underutilized, nearby parking facilities in other buildings, is another way to reduce minimum requirements. This strategy has been successful in Montgomery County, Maryland, Boulder, Colorado and Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Encourage land banking of parking lots.

Land banking reserves space for possible anticipated parking demand in the future. In the meantime, the space is used for communal space or amenities, like gardens, parks or playgrounds. (It may be required that developers turn the banked land into a landscaped reserve or playground). If the City believes that housing developments in the Downtown will in the future require more parking facilities than they do today, new

developments can be required to maintain a certain percentage of their minimum parking requirement in the form of a land bank. In addition, the City can provide incentives to owners of properties with large unused parking lots to turn them into landscaped reserves. This is one of 21 “parking best practices” recommended in New York City’s review of city parking policies around the country (New York City Department of City Planning).

Allow an in-lieu fee for developers to reduce new parking.

This would allow developers to pay a fee to the council instead of developing the minimum parking requirements. This fee could be hypothecated to fund public transit; it is also recommended in NYC’s city parking review.



Public parking locations in Downtown Lewiston

amenities + services





Downtown Business Amenities

A strong business community will help continue Downtown Lewiston's growth, and the city should continue current efforts to improve retail, food and beverage, and other offerings along Lisbon Street and within the Downtown neighborhood. A wide range of programming within businesses, such as art shows and other public gatherings, can serve as a means of bringing together diverse members of the community.

Forage Market, one of several new destinations on Lisbon Street

Amenities + Services

Downtown Business Amenities (continued)

Using currently underutilized spaces and empty storefronts as 'temporary 'pop-up' spaces and events presents one idea for attracting members of the Lewiston-Auburn community to the Downtown on an ongoing basis, and offers a space for artists and others who may not have access to retail outlets for selling their products full-time. To create an active, walkable street life, retail and food and beverage businesses should be encouraged to remain open in the evenings and on weekends so that Lisbon Street can serve as a social destination for college students, Downtown residents, and other members of the Lewiston-Auburn community on a regular basis. These extended hours can be initiated by a monthly or weekly evening event, until the extended hours could be phased in across the board.

In a number of cases, interest in both entrepreneurial ventures and civic-minded projects from residents requires funding that lacks consistent funding mechanisms. Creating or expanding opportunities for community-sourced microgrants for businesses or civic projects would serve the dual purpose of increasing the community's connectedness through a social function and providing funding for worthy projects. Possibilities that could be explored include community social evenings where donations are assigned to a project initiated by a

community member (Detroit Soup Mirco Grants).

One local business leader mentioned that he does not believe that there is a strong enough association of local business owners, particularly those along Lisbon Street. He would like to see greater coordination of these members of the community in order to improve communication about facade improvements and other changes to the district. He believes that business owners would be open to recommendations about how to make their shops more productive, but also wants to be sure that they are part of decision-making processes regarding the streetscape along Lisbon Street.

Many residents spoke of a perception of Downtown that could dissuade people from visiting, shopping, eating, and living in the Downtown area. Almost all of these residents acknowledged that this perception is significantly different than the reality, so addressing this perception problem should be a primary and over-arching goal of the comprehensive plan, spearheaded by the city and an alliance of downtown businesses. To this end, many residents called for continued streetscape improvements as a tool to improve downtown businesses' image and increase the level of foot traffic. New sidewalks, more public trash cans, public art, and more public seating were all identified as design elements that could draw more people to downtown's public spaces.

Downtown Civic Services and Programs

There are a number of programs in the downtown area providing excellent service for residents, and there are several ways to improve that level of service. In order to better connect current social services with the most pressing needs within the community, residents identified several priorities. The first deals with language fluency for new Americans. Language courses for immigrants currently focus on citizenship, but do not provide sufficient job training or preparation, which warrants revision; such courses can potentially be taught by Bates or other college students (through community-

engaged thesis projects or other volunteer outlets) in order to keep administrative costs low and create a closer connection between academic institutions and the community. Educational programs should be established to promote integration within the community, both within schools and as informational programs for local adults. Furthermore, community services for working parents, such as daycare, Lewiston Public Library activities, and the existing Androscoggin Head Start and Child Care (AHSCC) program, should be better coordinated and possibly expanded to reduce hindrances to residents' abilities to maintain jobs.



Locations of civic amenities in Downtown Lewiston

As many residents observed, there is no central, convenient gathering place Downtown; at the same time, landmark buildings, such as St. Patrick's Church on Bates Street next to the Community Concepts building, sit vacant and waiting for use. Introducing a new community center could be an important first step in facilitating dialogue between communities. Another request that was often repeated involved reintroducing community-wide festivals, events, and parades. Community members recalled regular civic events in the past, and a number voiced support for using common space (Kennedy Park, Lisbon Street, etc.) to host community-wide events. Many also mentioned interest in establishing programming for public parks (particularly Paradis Park) that could involve a range of after-school or weekend activities.

Lastly, a number of residents - particularly students - indicated an interest in expanding and utilizing city-wide volunteering opportunities to create spaces for groups to intermingle and collaborate. Youth-centered organizations, including Lots to Gardens, Tree Street Youth, and others, have experienced laudable success in bringing communities together, and multiple students expressed interest in expanding these programs to include initiatives that would engage adults in the community as well. In addition, the city should continue to support organizations undertaking important work in supporting Lewiston's youth. Dedicated staff and volunteers are providing high quality opportunities for Lewiston's youth and should continue to be supported by Lewiston's City Council regarding issues of funding, property ownership, and building upkeep.

Relationship with Local Educational Institutions

Educational Institutions and Lewiston

Conversations regarding the role of educational institutions in Lewiston were held with Bates students and faculty members, but take-aways from these discussions are applicable to all colleges in the area. Bates College, USM Lewiston-Auburn College, Kaplan University, and Central Maine Community College are great assets in Lewiston, both as academic institutions that bring a new crop of students to the city every year, and as steady, stable employers in the area. In particular, Bates is known as a progressive institution that has always embraced diversity and a range of students. However, it is also perceived as being isolated “up on the hill,” given that the school is situated away from Downtown, over 90% of students live on campus, and most of the amenities that they require are available nearby or in shopping centers away from the Downtown. That said, many Bates students do engage with the wider Lewiston community through service learning experiences facilitated by the Harward Center; students from other colleges also assume similar roles. A stronger relationship between these institutions and Downtown may also encourage more students to remain in Lewiston after graduation and continue to contribute to development in the city.

Students in the Community

Discussions with current Bates faculty members and students highlight an energized, outward-facing mindset within the current administration, which makes this an ideal time to strengthen the connection between Bates and the Downtown community. President Clayton Spencer has begun to develop relationships with residents and has put in efforts towards highlighting the city’s assets. Further, she and some current faculty are discussing more opportunities for Bates students to integrate into life in Lewiston. According to one faculty member, ideas that have been considered include the following; these apply to other colleges, too:

Encouraging a range of students to live Downtown rather than on-campus. This would be encouraged for USM students currently living on-campus, Bates students in their final years of study, and commuting students who may currently live elsewhere in the area. For students

transitioning from on-campus housing, this would need to be planned appropriately in order to ensure that relationships with residents are not compromised. The potential impact on the Downtown real estate market would need to be considered, too, to ensure that student-occupied housing would not limit supply for families and other households.

Opening a studio space or workbar for students Downtown. The idea of this potential initiative is to provide more reasons for students to come to the Downtown, and to offer studio and other space to students that would not be available on campus. It would also make college students more visible as members of the community.

Developing amenities that attract students between campus and Downtown. The route from Bates to Lisbon Street has few retail or service amenities to attract students, and is perceived to be unsafe, particularly at night. Providing points of activity that create a path of attractions between Bates and Lisbon Street would make it easier and more comfortable for students to consistently visit businesses Downtown. Similarly, increasing the range of amenities in the Downtown would encourage greater interaction among students from different colleges in the area.

Formal Community Engagement

Current academic and athletic programs may offer strong opportunities for improving student relationships with Downtown residents. For example, the community-engaged learning thesis program that Bates students have the option to complete in their senior year includes a requirement for a substantial amount (40+ hours) of community service. Students have found this to be an attractive if challenging opportunity, and those who have selected this option have had valuable experiences collaborating with community organizations. Given the needs in the community, including English language training, job training, and expansion of other programs geared towards Lewiston's immigrant population, there should be no shortage of meaningful volunteer work for interested students. In fact, some new programs that this report and the Comprehensive Plan for Lewiston recommend would benefit greatly from the support of students.

In addition, Bates' athletics department has offered programs for community youth over the years, including sports camps and swimming lessons for local youth. Otherwise, sporting events and cultural performances tend to primarily be attended by Bates-affiliated spectators (students, faculty, parents). For local families looking for a nearby outing, Bates or USM games and concerts may fit the bill. Soccer is immensely popular among Somali immigrant youth, and so increasing opportunities for them to attend games may begin to expose them to opportunities and parts of the community that have not previously been available to them.

Lewiston's colleges are well-situated to serve as a liaison between various stakeholder groups, and the energy and focus of students makes this a great time to explore ways of expanding formal and informal interaction between local colleges and the community.



Distance and travel times between Bates College and Lisbon Street

additional feedback





Additional Community Feedback

Conversations with community members, City of Lewiston representatives, and others invested in the well-being of the Downtown provided feedback on a variety of topics, including some beyond DNAC's initial set of questions. Much of the information provided was not only interesting, but seemed important to communicate in the context of DNAC's current work. Themes and ideas that emerged across many discussions are included here.

**Lewiston Youth Advisory Council
discussions with Downtown youth**

Additional Feedback

Employment

Jobs are top-of-mind for Lewiston residents. The topic frequently came unprompted from many people who believe that connecting residents to employment should be top-priority Downtown. Some believe that more jobs need to be available in the area, and that the city should be involved in attracting employers to Lewiston. Others believe that employment challenges are based less on job availability and more on structural difficulties that residents face. Some of the key concerns that were cited include:

Lack of mobility. Without access to a car or transit, residents cannot consistently reach places of employment.

Insufficient English language and job skills. Multiple people noted that the Adult Education Center in Lewiston is a good resource, but it focuses more on citizenship than on job readiness, leaving immigrant residents without the necessary skills for available jobs. Hours are not particularly flexible, either, making it difficult for many residents to regularly attend classes.

Lack of childcare. Women have a particularly difficult time maintaining steady employment when they do not have a consistent, safe place for their children to stay during working hours. The Department of Health and Human Services offers two childcare options, but one interviewee noted

that they are difficult to access. Options such as the Lewiston Public Library activities and the Androscoggin Head Start and Child Care (AHSCC) program should be supplemented and better coordinated. A lack of childcare was cited as a principal barrier to employment, with some children spending their time in less than ideal conditions. Downtown residents could be assisted in setting up daycare facilities as a small business, possibly in the suggested community center space if it were established. Some companies, recognizing the importance of this issue to the productivity of their employees, have partnered with childcare centers, nonprofits and/or networks of licensed home-based providers. Local employers could be encouraged to take a similar approach. Training and activities related to childcare could also be an opportunity for cultural exchanges, as many parents have expressed interest in learning more about different approaches that families take.

Limited options for those with criminal records. Many ex-felons are disqualified from applying to jobs for which they would otherwise qualify.

Discrimination. One community member noted that Muslim women have a hard time finding jobs because employers are reluctant to hire women wearing head hijabs.

Despite these concerns, a few promising success stories and ideas were also part of

conversations. One business owner cited a job training program at L.L. Bean as having successfully brought Somali immigrants on board as full-time and seasonal employees. The program began as a trial, with some risk being shared with an immigrant-support organization, but has led to a number of jobs for local Somali residents. In addition, the New American Sustainable Agriculture Project has been very successful and may have the potential to be expanded to include other Somali residents.

The business climate along Lisbon Street was cited as a place that has benefitted entrepreneurial Somalis and has provided jobs, but one individual mentioned concern that the shops that have opened in the past few years are oriented too exclusively towards the Somali community. There seems, then, to be opportunity for the City to encourage an expansion of the variety of businesses along Lisbon Street, meanwhile drawing from the skills, experiences, and needs of the Downtown community.

Finally, with regard to job training and language skills, multiple conversations turned to the idea of involving Bates students in programs in order to increase the availability of teaching resources. It seems worthwhile to explore opportunities for existing groups and organizations, such as Bates and the Adult Education Center, to begin or strengthen their collaboration to meet job readiness needs.

Community Engagement and Cross-Cultural Exchange

Residents ranging from high school students to city officials discussed the need to increase cross-cultural dialogue and opportunities for community engagement in Lewiston and in the Downtown specifically. DNAC and Lots to Gardens were cited as exemplary for their efforts to prompt conversation across cultural groups. Otherwise, many agreed that school-aged youth tend to integrate more easily than local adult populations do. Suggestions for improving connections among Downtown residents include introducing a new community center that can be programmed with activities for all residents in the area, and working through local religious institutions to reach a variety of residents. The inter-faith clean-up day that was conducted in the fall is a great example of the types of programs that could be used to draw together a cross-section of the population for constructive purposes.

Schools in Lewiston are seen as places where cultural integration can naturally develop among younger residents. Mixing ESL students with native English speakers may help to bring immigrant students up to speed; teachers also have an opportunity to have conversations with immigrant parents about local cultural norms and specific needs that their children face in the classroom. It is recognized that limited tax income plays a role in teacher hiring in Lewiston; nonetheless, many interviewees cited a need for improved resources to assist with language in the schools in order to ease students' transition to the American system.

In response to concerns about diversity in schools, one member of the community commented that redistricting, while politically challenging, could serve to better integrate students of different racial and ethnic backgrounds and socio economic classes in the public school system. Similarly, one landlord suggested the idea of strategically combining certain city owned sites (such as current schools or school administrative buildings) and locating a new elementary school Downtown on a parcel (or series of parcels) where condemned homes have been demolished, or on Franklin Pasture, for example. A newly constructed elementary school would receive state funding for construction (rather than fall to city responsibility), the current site of the elementary school could be sold for profit, and a greater flow of employees, parents, and students would have reason to regularly spend time Downtown. While a large scale idea, this type of proposal serves to prompt more creative thinking about the city's role in facilitating integration across cultures and socioeconomic classes and fostering community activity in the Downtown.

Safety and Security

Community members have mixed views about safety in the Downtown neighborhood. Local statistics indicate crime rates that are below the perceived level of illegal activity in the area (negative perceptions are based on anecdotes and some landlords' experiences with tenant involvement with drug activity). That said, many people recognize that incidents are caused by a concentrated cluster of people, and that most residents are law-abiding and respectful members of the community.

One area of concern that residents and business owners alike cited is that children frequently are allowed to roam the neighborhood without strict supervision. Shop owners associate this lack of accountability with shoplifting and vandalism, and so would like to see greater oversight of Downtown youth. A resident noted that local police officers on foot have occasionally spoken with crowds of children, which has had a positive effect on their behavior; it seems, therefore, that more foot patrol around the neighborhood (in lieu of officers making rounds by car, thus introducing no additional cost) would offer better opportunities for police officers to get to know local residents and have a sense of where higher-risk areas and groups of youth tend to be located.

Mill Development

Community members tend to associate the Bates mills along the river with the Downtown area, and believe that their redevelopment should be integrated into plans for improving Downtown. Housing, arts and entertainment, and corporate space have all been identified as possible uses for buildings such as Bates Mill #5 and the Dominican Block. Regardless, from an urban design and economic development perspective, it seems most useful to consider the Downtown as extending to the river; uses for mill buildings should complement the residential and commercial activity taking place in the “Midtown” neighborhood, rather than competing with it.

Local Politics

City politics in Lewiston have been the source of tension for some time in the Downtown. However, multiple people noted that they believe that increased political openness and positive messaging towards more diverse residents (immigrants, residents with criminal records, etc.) regarding local development is encouraging. Additionally, community members recognized a need for more sufficient and reflective representation in the City government, but they are hopeful that this can change in the coming years.



Potential area to be impacted by integrating Downtown and Riverfront planning



comparable cities



Case Studies

In order to better frame the understanding of downtown revitalization in a context beyond Lewiston, the report references precedents and ongoing projects in a variety of other cities. Rather than definitively determine the recommendations made by the report, the comparable cities presented here are intended to ground the input from the diverse set of stakeholders in Lewiston's downtown development. These examples may serve as the basis for further research as DNAC finalizes its voice in the master planning process.

Community garden in Cleveland, Ohio

comparable cities

Case Studies (continued)

The report looks to cities that have experienced similar challenges to Lewiston, whether decline in employment opportunity, distressed downtown properties, or an immigration influx. Cities are cited informally as a means to offer a broad scope of potential strategies as Lewiston moves forward. Broader practices that are not city-specific are summarized following the case studies. While the cases presented here are useful, they naturally require an additional step to understand how they might best be applied in Lewiston.

Dayton, OH: The City of Dayton branded a “Welcome to Dayton Plan” to designate city-wide efforts around the integration of immigrants to the city. Coordinated efforts included the hiring of interpreters for public service offices and broader foreign language resources at the public library, mainly including easily accessed English classes. (City of Dayton).

Cleveland, OH: Cleveland has utilized a model of “model blocks” in which the city designates specific 3 - 4 block areas in which to dedicate comprehensive city resources. Though city resources are leveraged, the effort was lead primarily by a consortium of community development corporations (CDCs). The method seeks to have a visible and concentrated impact (rather than dispersed throughout the expansive

distressed area) and to maximize municipal and community resources. The program aims to both demolish and rebuild at the same time, thereby preventing the common occurrence of demolition without a clear plan for reconstruction, which many citizens cite as a troubling situation in an already distressed downtown (PolicyLink).

Cleveland has an additional project geared toward local employment, engaging the economic capacity of the local hospitals and large universities with the coordinating capacity of the municipal government. The project focuses on preparing employees for ecologically sustainable practices that meet the needs of the major institutions (such as laundry services) and the needs of the community (local food access) (Evergreen Cooperatives).

Detroit, MI: In Detroit, the creation of a community land trust enabled the city to comprehensively recover foreclosed and vacant buildings and move forward with rebuilding. Specific corridors were identified for rebuilding (rather than the broadly affected downtown), reminiscent of the targeted practices in Cleveland, OH with “model blocks.” (Woodward Corridor Initiative).

Hartford, CT: Hartford has spearheaded an effort to construct smaller, market-rate apartments targeted toward young professionals. The effort focuses on construction in older, vacant buildings in

order to maximize the availability of units and utilize historic infrastructure. This availability is advantageous in encouraging young people to settle in the area, capturing the economic advantages of market-rate construction, and expanding the viability of the existing downtown built environment (The Courant, December 2012).

Lowell, MA: Similar to the efforts in Hartford, Lowell has guided the construction of condominiums to accommodate young professional singles and couples as well as non-traditional families, including immigrants. As part of the city's efforts toward residential construction, development has been geared toward "live-work" spaces to create more flexibility in the use of downtown structures. Additionally, development has targeted historic buildings (such as churches) to be developed into multi-use spaces, such as residential townhomes and office space (Boston Globe, January 2012).

Chelsea, MA: Chelsea branded a "Box District," an area of redevelopment of old industrial buildings into loft and conventional apartments, including market-rate and affordable units. Incremental changes were made to the city's zoning code to accommodate higher density construction, particularly to enable market-rate townhomes, larger scale mixed-income developments, and further facilitate homeownership opportunities in the residential market. Multiple public and private partners were involved in the integration of the new housing (Box District, Chelsea, MA).

Youngstown, OH: A "Lots of Green" effort in Youngstown focused specifically on the conversion of vacant lots into community gardens and urban farms (rather than

more generally toward the reuse of vacant lands). This effort has been combined with a broader effort to redevelop foreclosed homes around newly "greened" lots, creating a more comprehensive community rebuilding strategy that is not singularly focused on housing, particularly as this project was part of the larger Youngstown 2010 master plan (Youngstown Neighborhood Development Corporation).

Dudley Square (Boston), MA: In a high poverty area with high vacancy rates, the Dudley Square Neighborhood Initiative formed a community land trust that was granted the unusual designation of eminent domain over 1300 parcels. This high level power allowed the group to make a comprehensive plan for revitalization from a grassroots perspective. The community group has also been recognized for their efforts of cultural inclusion, with community events intended to showcase the diverse immigrant groups in the area (Dudley Square Neighborhood Initiative).

General Downtown Revitalization Practices

In researching downtown efforts across the country, the report encountered multiple broad guidelines that have shaped the understanding of stakeholder input throughout the report.

Public-private partnerships are of utmost importance to the revitalization process. In light of challenges to municipal financing, private partners offer much needed economic support while broadening the effort, the range of stakeholders, and innovative viewpoints into the rebuilding process. The Federal Reserve Bank of Boston's "Working Cities" effort is a prime example of public-private partnership targeted to urban revitalization. Potential partners include universities, hospitals, mortgage lenders, among other anchoring community institutions. Potential partnerships include creating policies for tax abatement, utilizing the fundraising and lending power of financial institutions to create small business loan programs directed at the downtown.

The formation of a land bank or other community development organization with fundraising as well as development capacity is a useful tool for managing ownership of a variety of vacant parcels. Additionally, a downtown organization with a broader capacity for managing urban design principles, marketing and branding, as well as business assistance and strategic planning are useful partners in the project for a revitalized downtown.

Community engagement for new residents (such as young professionals) is immensely

helpful in building community that bridges multiple groups. Successful efforts combine professional networking with community engagement so that new residents of all backgrounds are able to meet one another. A key to a vital downtown is a diverse set of businesses. While downtowns may want to discourage specific businesses such as bars, it is largely agreed upon that the best practice is instead to encourage desirable businesses primarily (rather than discourage any specific set). Formal limitations are often seen as discouraging to all businesses, regardless of the intent.

Pedestrian-only main streets are a key feature of appealing and healthy downtowns. In areas where this is not feasible permanently, designating specific days of the week or month for pedestrian-only access to key downtown streets is a method to bring attention to the assets of the downtown while encouraging greater access to all.

Pay for Success, or Social Impact Bonds, is a newly emerging model for intervention in areas of concentrated poverty. Goldman Sachs is a current leader in Pay for Success lending, and their pilot lending projects have so far targeted incarceration and recidivism rates in New York City, NY and public education costs in Salt Lake City, UT. The Pay for Success model is an opportunity for cities where high public costs could potentially be reduced with targeted intervention funded by the lending partner. The loan is then repaid with municipal savings. In Lewiston, a potential partnership could be formed with the goal of reducing the costs of special education and english language learning education, for example.

With regard to building practices, several general guidelines are emphasized across writings on downtown development:

- New construction should have street facing front porches
- Development on commercial corridors (such as along Lisbon Street) should restrict residential or office purposes to the second floor to allow for more commercial space on the ground floor
- Townhomes should be constructed to accommodate a variety of family sizes
- Higher density condominium construction can accommodate rental and homeownership opportunities simultaneously and equitably
- Large scale development should include a central community feature, such as a grocery store

Appendix A: Next Steps

While this report began with recommendations for redevelopment, next steps are included in conclusion as a guide for moving forward with a renewed vision of Lewiston's downtown. The research and findings offered here represent a basis for the Downtown Neighborhood Action Committee and the City of Lewiston to continue building a community identity for Downtown.

While CDP's report has covered a wide range of issues, the built environment in particular presents an important challenge and opportunity for DNAC and the City. As such, a logical next step will be to address urban design standards that are both specific to Downtown and catered to community goals. Given the Downtown's particular identity and needs, a set of clear standards will serve the City well in shaping Downtown growth.

Primarily, clear and unified design standards are needed for: housing typology, lot sizes, building heights, density of neighborhood buildings and multifamily units, street lighting design and spacing, and sidewalk and pedestrian improvements. Practical and thoughtful standards will facilitate Downtown's goals for an attractive, safe, multi-purpose and inclusive neighborhood.

Careful considerations can produce collaborative efforts, such as public and private interests in streetlight design. Given the community's expressed interest in the installation of streetlights, the City could logically incorporate input from business owners or residents directly on the design process and utilize street lights as one contribution toward a more robust downtown identity that emphasizes safety, commerce, and community.

The tangibility of downtown improvements represents an immense opportunity to engage a wide range of citizens on issues that address the economics, aesthetics, and future development of downtown. Utilizing a "model blocks" methodology will enable the City and the downtown community to engage with immediate improvements and thoughtful policy that will build an exemplary downtown, one block at a time.

Appendix B: List of Participants in Lewiston

Noah Abdi	Resident
Chris Aceto	Landlord
Hussein Ahmed	Barwaqo Halal Store (Global Hallal Market)
Gil Arsenaault	Director, Planning and Code Department
Ed Barrett	City Administrator
Ben Chin	Maine People's Alliance
Kristen Cloutier	Bates College Harward Center for Community Partnerships
Dominic	Employee, Poiriers Market (Donald Allen, Owner)
Annie Doran	Lots to Gardens
Jim Dowling	Lewiston Housing Authority
John Egan	CEI Maine
Daniel Fitzpatrick	Landlord
Nancy Gallant	Resident
George "Flip" Gosselin	Dee's Market and Deli (Blake Street)
Dave Hediger	Deputy Director, Planning and Code Department
Lincoln Jeffers	Director of Economic and Community Development
Maurice "Mo" Landry	Mo's Barber Shop
Heather Lindkvist	Bates College, Anthropology Department
Neil McCullagh	The American City Coalition
Adilah Muhammad	Landlord
Sitey Muktar	Resident
Phil Nadeau	Assistant City Administrator
Nadifa Mohamed	Student, Lots to Gardens
Tom Peters	Landlord
Barbara Rankins	Resident
Darby Ray	Bates College Harward Center for Community Partnerships
Erin Reed	Trinity Jubilee Center
Shanna Rogers	Community Concepts
Bob Rowe	New Beginnings
Gabrielle Russell	Resident
Michael Sargent	Bates College
Julia Sleeper	Tree Street Youth
Nathan Szanton	The Szanton Company (Developer)

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Images

p. 6-7 (CDP Photo)

p. 12-13 (Bates College)

p. 14-15 –(Beautiful Downtown Lewiston)

p. 17 –(City of Lewiston)

p. 19 – (City-Data)

p. 26 – (Flickr)

p. 32-33 – (Wikimedia)

p. 36 – (DNAC Photo)

p. 39 – (CDP Photo)

p. 44-45 – (Rocky Coast News)

p. 56-57 – (Forage Market)

p. 66-67 – (City of Lewiston)

p. 72-73 (Burton, Bell, Carr Development)

Maps

All included maps were sourced from GoogleMaps and overlaid with findings from CDP or DNAC.

Appendix D: CDP Members

CDP members are all Master's students at the Harvard Graduate School of Design and/or the Harvard Kennedy School of Government. The 2013-2014 group members who contributed to this report are:

Mohit Anand	Public Administration
Patrick Boateng	Public Policy / Master in Urban Planning
Nicholas Cheng	Public Policy
Marissa Davis	Public Policy
Jonathan Goldman	Urban Planning
Amy Larsen	Public Policy
Maynard Leon	Architecture / Master in Urban Planning
Ishani Mehta	Public Policy
Laura Melle	Public Policy
Marcus Mello	Architecture
Sara Minkara	Public Policy
Candace Mitchell	Public Policy / New York University School of Law
Phi Nguyen	Architecture
Phillip Olaleye	Public Policy
Billy Powers	Public Policy
Margaret Scott	Urban Planning
Jon Springfield	Urban Planning
Anna Stansbury	Public Policy
Alison Tramba	Urban Planning
Georgia Williams	Architecture

